# The Fire Brigades Union

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Our Ref: MW/sll

23 February 2015

Rt Hon John Bercow MP
Speaker of the House of Commons
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Speaker

**WILL YOU ALLOW PARLIAMENT TO BE MISLED OVER FIREFIGHTER PENSIONS?**

You will recall the debate in the House of Commons on firefighter pensions on 15 December 2014. Many firefighters attended the debate and many, many more watched the debate on television.

During this debate the House was assured several times that measures were being put in place to protect the position of firefighters who might suffer from an age-related decline in fitness. It is clear from the record that these assurances influenced the decision of the House that day. However, as you will see from our correspondence to the Prime Minister (attached), the claims made on behalf of the Government have been shown to be without foundation. More alarmingly, they had been warned of this in advance, including by the largest fire service employer in England on the basis of legal advice which should have been known to all at the time.

You are responsible for the conduct of debates in the House of Commons. If members of Parliament abuse the rules of debate you intervene. If, during debate, a member accused another of lying, you would take action. However, if such standards of behaviour are to have any meaning you surely have responsibility to ensure that Ministers give honest and accurate answers when questioned during debate. If they are shown to have failed to do so they must be held to account.

Firefighters are watching this process closely. They will expect that the House of Commons should have mechanisms to address these issues and that they are put to use. If this does not happen, the reputation of Parliament and those currently holding office within it will be severely damaged.

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I look forward to your response and to hearing what you intend to do to address this matter of serious concern.

Yours sincerely

M. Wrack

**MATT WRACK**
**GENERAL SECRETARY**

Att.

cc: Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Lyn Brown MP
John McDonnell MP